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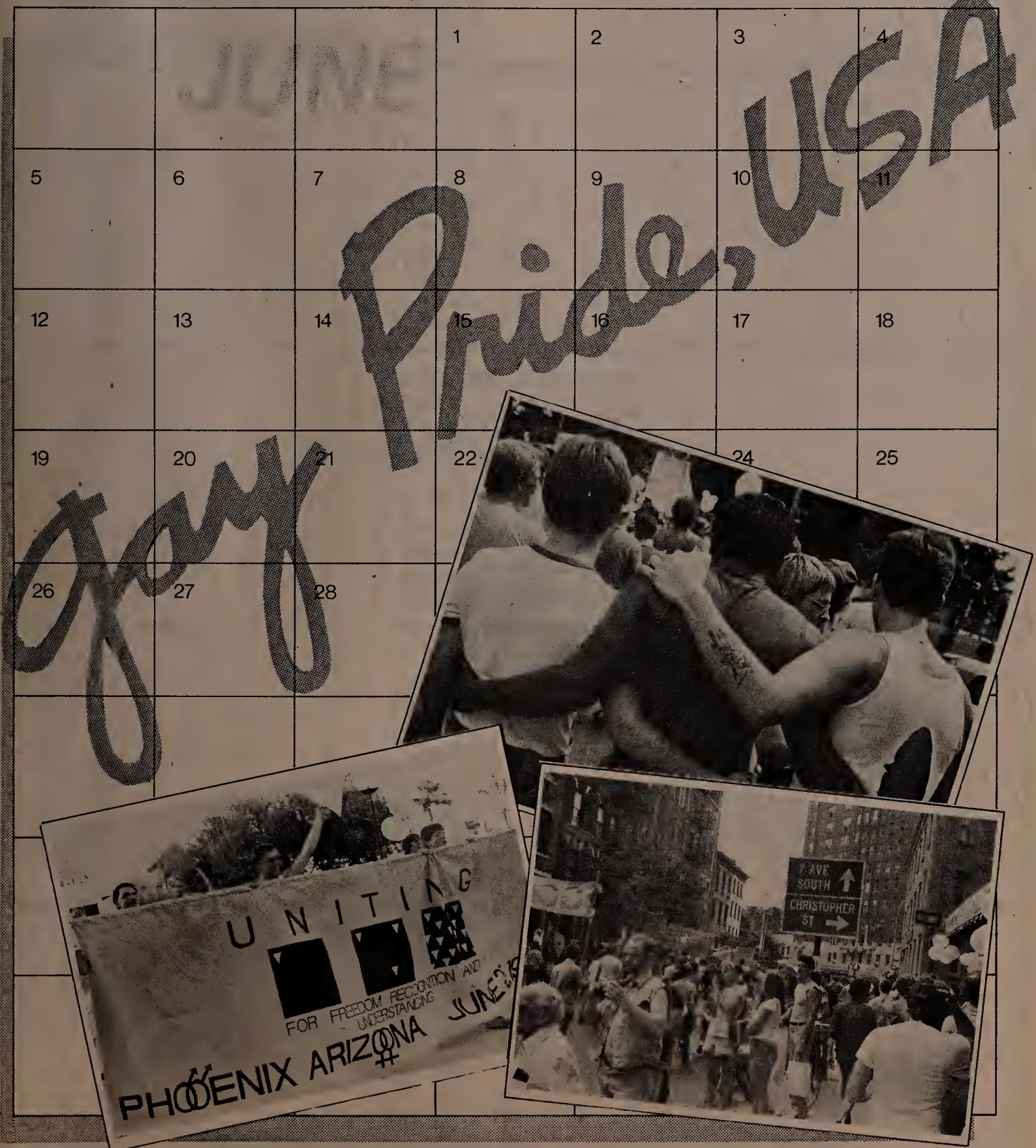
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July 9, 1983

New York and Vermont: Pride and Precedent

By Bob Nelson

NEW YORK — Gay people of every sex, race, age, religion, occupation, and persuasion turned out for the fourteenth annual Lesbian and Gay Pride march and rally on June 26, commemorating the Stonewall riots, and turning Fifth Avenue into a festive stretch of balloons, banners, confetti, and amused tourists.

States had been denied an injunction to stop the march, which they contended would "desecrate" the steps of the Cathedral. The Catholic group, in particular, protested that a "God is gay" banner had been unfurled on Cathedral steps in past years.

A beefed-up police patrol around the Cathedral seemed ner-

By Larry Goldsmith

BURLINGTON, VT — Lesbians and gay men in this northern Vermont city celebrated their first Lesbian and Gay Pride Day on June 25 as 500 people gathered for a rally in front of City Hall, then marched through the center of town.

Plans for the march had provoked a wave of controversy which found expression in articles, an editorial and numerous letters to the editor of the *Burlington Free Press*. The debate reached a peak when the city Board of Aldermen [sic] voted 6 to 5 on June 14 to issue a resolution recognizing the day's events. A week later the Board blocked a bid by a coalition of Christian groups to rescind the

proclamation.

The *Free Press* responded with an editorial decrying the resolution. "The aldermen's action is a patent endorsement of the cause of gay rights," the paper claimed. "In going beyond the practice of issuing a permit for the event, the aldermanic majority has embarked on a brambled path where it can be stung by the thorns of constituent disapproval and the demands of other groups for similar proclamations."

The *Free Press* followed the editorial with a tide of letters, most condemning homosexuality on the basis of Christian beliefs, published on the day before and the day of the rally and march.

"The shit really hit the fan this week," local lesbian activist Peggy Luhrs told the rally. "The city came out with a proclamation and guess who came out of the closet? The homophobes!"

"If the warmongers, the witch-burners—the ones who hate gays but don't mind war or starving children—don't like us, we must be doing something right," Luhrs added.

Many Burlington lesbians and gay men, particularly unnerved by the homophobic letters in the *Free Press*, expressed fear that coming out for the rally and march might lose them their homes or their jobs. Burlington, although it is

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More National Pride on Page 8

But confrontation hung in the air as well, perhaps more palpably than the confetti. Conservative Christians and gay religious groups faced off in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the AIDS crisis was a prominent topic during the parade, which was dedicated to "AIDS victims everywhere."

According to police and press reports, forty thousand gay men and lesbians participated in the Gay/Lesbian Pride March from Columbus Circle across Central Park South, down Fifth Avenue to Washington Square and west through the Village to the West Side Highway. But Grand Marshal Tony Gambino told the downtown rally, "We came home today. We came back into the Village. You saw those crowds on Fifth Avenue. We had a hundred and fifty thousand marchers today."

While most of Sunday's participants took the march more as a celebration than confrontation, conflict was in the air as about 200 members of conservative religious groups gathered at Rockefeller Center, across the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral. Police had cordoned off the front steps and sidewalk of the Cathedral in anticipation of trouble between gays and the conservative Christians and Jews.

Several groups, among them the Catholic War Veterans and the Rabbinical Alliance of the United

States had been denied an injunction to stop the march, which they contended would "desecrate" the steps of the Cathedral. The Catholic group, in particular, protested that a "God is gay" banner had been unfurled on Cathedral steps in past years.

As the contingent from Dignity, a gay Catholic's group, approached the steps of the Cathedral, a large banner reading "Knock and it will be opened" was unfurled. About 300 marchers stopped in front of the Cathedral to chant "Open it!"

As pro-gay Catholic priests stopped to address the crowd, anti-gay protesters across the street brandished signs reading "Jesus replaces old lifestyles with new life" and "Don't destroy America for your lust" and "Stop the immoral conspiracy at City Hall" and "I million ex-gays broke it — you can too!" But only taunts and jeers were exchanged between the two groups of demonstrators.

At the rally downtown, politics was in evidence as well. A high point of the rally was the speech delivered by Ginny Apuzzo, executive director of the National Gay Task Force. "Before gay pride, there was gay and lesbian rage," said Apuzzo. "We have the opportunity and damn good reason to be in touch with that rage for the second Stonewall." Apuzzo called for a gay community center, "with no more bullshit about it."

Referring to an editorial in the

Not the Usual March

By Larry Goldsmith

There is a tendency among Bostonians to consider their own Lesbian and Gay Pride march almost as a dress rehearsal. Oh, we focus on our local struggles, we have our own local brand of fun, and this year the appearance of sunshine brought a record 18,000 of us out into the streets. But it's not accidental that the Boston Pride Committee always schedules the march for the weekend before the New York City march; the committee knows that while no one would miss the event here at home, many of us also want to reserve that next weekend for the Really Big One.

A few weeks ago I took a bus out to the western Massachusetts town of Northampton (pop. 30,000) to cover one of the first marches of the season. Threats of violence at that event never materialized, but the sun did, for the first time this year in these cold latitudes. And despite the fact that, for me, Lesbian and Gay Pride marches for the

last three years have meant not so much liberation as long hours of scribbling, I enjoyed myself. For the Northampton march had something all the marches



Larry Goldsmith

There were fancy meetings in Burlington and all over the country for Pride Day. See the center-spread for more pictures.

I've been to in Boston, New York and Los Angeles have missed: a special sense of unity among the courageous queers marching through the streets of a small town.

This year, when Boston Pride was over and everyone in town seemed to be heading for New York, I bought a bus ticket and travelled in the opposite direction, to the first annual Lesbian and Gay Pride march and rally in Burlington, Vermont (pop. 38,000). Nobody had any idea who might show up, and a rash of letters in a local newspaper threatening hellfire and brimstone had raised the level of anxiety and paranoia. For unlike a big-city march, where one has a reasonable chance of surviving the day with one's anonymity intact, the march to Burlington City Hall was lined with faces all familiar to one another.

"I don't know why they bother to march anymore in

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Health Conference and Forum Focus on AIDS

By J.B. Molaghan RN, ANP

DENVER — Nearly 400 health care professionals attended the fifth national Lesbian/Gay Health Conference which was held in Denver Colorado June 9-12 1983, in conjunction with the second national Forum on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This exciting conference was co-sponsored by the National Gay Health Education Foundation, Inc. (NGHEF), the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights (AAPHR), and the Gay and Lesbian Health Alliance of Denver, Inc.

The conference attracted a diverse group of doctors, nurses, physician assistants, mental health workers and consumers from throughout the United States as well as delegates from Norway, Holland and Australia. The theme "Health Pioneering in the 80's," was illustrated by the hard work put into four days of networking, arguments, discussions and resolutions.

The second national Forum on AIDS began June 9 with a welcome by conference organizers Dan Pfeffer, Fran Miller, Jeff Richards and Helen Scheitinger

RN, who co-chaired the AIDS forum. Scheitinger addressed the issue of homophobia and AIDS and cited instances as drastic as "people who are thin... suspected as persons having AIDS."

A main concern of the conference was the negative stigma being attached to AIDS and the gay/lesbian community. The need to respond to recent national press coverage that implied AIDS can be spread through casual household contact was addressed.

Several leading medical authorities spoke at the AIDS forum. Dr. James Curran, head of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) task force on AIDS, pointed out that many cities not yet affected by AIDS have had the advantage of being able to plan for the future. Dr. Curran projected that the AIDS problem will continue to increase for sexually active gay men with multiple partners especially in areas not yet hard hit by AIDS.

The blood policy subcommittee encouraged "education to allow blood donors to voluntarily screen themselves for risk of potentially transmissible diseases and to strongly discourage intrusive forms of donor interviewing about

sexual preference and behavior."

The public policy workshops outlined several recommendations regarding the Federal Government's passive attitude towards AIDS, outlined a gay clients (patients) Bill of Rights and identified community needs, concluding that "homophobia is the major threat to our health and that we must struggle against internalized homophobia as we strive for Gay and Lesbian wellness."

A bit of controversy flared up just before Thursday's lunch break. Apparently, "an unidentified hotel employee" at the Executive Tower Inn, where the conference was held, directed that the words "Gay", "Lesbian" and "AIDS" not appear on any signs in the lobby. Although Harold Levin, general manager of the Inn and Dr. Paul Paroski, a conference organizer agreed that a series of misinterpretations had taken place, "Levin said he believed that because AIDS is feared and little understood, he didn't want to cause other guests undue concern, but had no intention of barring the use of the acronym." (Denver Post June 10, 1983.)

By voice vote, conference goes

decided to boycott all hotel related services, including the restaurants. The boycott ended two hours later, after 300 plus lunches were bought elsewhere, when the lobby bulletin board included "AIDS Forum."

One of the most controversial workshops attended was entitled "Making Changes in Sexual Mores." No consensus was reached for a "model of healthful sexual behavior," however strategies were discussed and debated on "implementation and acceptance of positive changes in sexuality."

Dr. Steve Follansbee and Grace Lusby RN, lead a discussion on infection control. Most participants agreed that persons with AIDS have been overly isolated in hospital and social environments. Guidelines were developed to insure the safety of the staff caring for persons with AIDS and to prevent extreme isolation of them. Two people with AIDS attending the workshop said that the chances are much higher of a "healthy person" giving a person with AIDS a harmful infection, than persons with AIDS infecting a "healthy person."

The most moving and signifi-

cant portion of the conference, for many, was meeting with people with AIDS. For so long, we have dealt with AIDS from an intellectual standpoint, excluding emotional reaction. At the closing of the conference fourteen men with AIDS addressed the general assembly with recommendations for health care professionals including coming out to their patients with AIDS. They urged replacing the label of "victims," which implies defeat and said that people with AIDS "are only occasional patients" which implies passivity, helplessness and dependence upon the care of others.

An emotional, moving visualization process was lead by a person with AIDS with all participants holding hands and "picturing our hearts as a glowing golden light filled with love spilling out to others."

Virginia Apuzzo, executive director of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) closed the conference stating, "My dear brothers, thank you so much for helping to fill the dark hole that has for so long separated us."

News Notes

quote of the week

"For all the fancy language of ambitious political candidates, and all the temporary executive orders of lip-serving political victors, we have always been out-laws, political outlaws to the Hetero-male and his many systems of law-and-order, political outlaws presumed to be secondary — along with every creature other than his own narrowly-defined, egocentrically-competitive, territorially-aggressive self and, so of course, necessarily inferior. . . .Perhaps it is time we truly came forth as a Separate People whose time has come to let others try to prove *us* wrong, for a change — if they can!"

— Radical faerie and co-founder of the Mattachine Society, Harry Hay, in remarks at the Cincinnati, Ohio Pride Rally June 19, 1983.

oh, it's him again

PLACERVILLE, CA — Remember John Briggs? He's the former California state senator whose crusades against queers and for tougher death penalties brought him fame. The Briggs Initiative, which would have made it illegal for gays or lesbians to teach in public schools or for anyone to portray homosexuality in a positive light in schools, was defeated by a massive statewide coalition effort in 1978.

Briggs was recently charged with a misdemeanor in a rifle-shooting incident at his home, according to the *Sacramento Bee*. Apparently a process server went to Briggs' home to serve him a summons arising from a disputed plumbing bill. Briggs fired a shot in the direction of Chuck Putney, the server, after arguing about Putney's right to go onto his property to deliver the legal papers.

The district attorney decided that the offense was only a misdemeanor, even though it could have warranted a state prison term, because Briggs wasn't really trying to shoot Putney.

mishima's life to be preserved on celluloid

TOYKO — Filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola has announced his next project — a film biography of Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, according to the *Washington Blade*. Mishima, ardent militarist and ardent homosexual, committed ritual suicide in 1970. The film will be in Japanese and shot on location in Japan.

Coppola said about the project, "This unique man who made his life his art appeals to many of my friends and associates in the United States."



"Hikers for Life" at the Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, Mass. Sponsored by the Chiltern Mountain Club, the hike raised \$8000 in donations and pledges for Boston's AIDS Action Committee.

grnl's field director resigns

WASHINGTON — The Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) has announced the resignation of Susan Green, field director, effective September 1. In a press statement, Green said her decision is "not a reflection of my feelings for the organization or its leader."

Green has been credited with developing GRNL's grassroots network, thought by some to be the most effective in the country.

GRNL will accept resumes for the post until July 25. Annual salary is \$16,000. For information, call (202) 546-1801.

anti-gay cartoon provokes protests

WASHINGTON — An editorial cartoon depicting presidential contender Walter Mondale reversing his support for gay rights because of AIDS drew vehement protests from 70 *Washington Times* staffpeople, according to the *Washington Blade*.

In the cartoon, a caricatured Mondale is saying to a campaign staff member, "With the AIDS scare on the rise, we'll have to start handling the Gay issue with kid gloves." The staff member replies, "Rubber gloves would be more like it, sir."

The objecting staff members, many of them news room employees, signed a petition of protest and delivered it to the deputy managing editor on June 15. On June 16, the paper published an editorial sympathetic to people with AIDS.

The cartoon was also criticized by such diverse groups as the Mondale presidential campaign, the National Conservative Political Action Committee and the DC Gay Activist Alliance.

houston's mayor in trouble over a.i.d.s. allocation

HOUSTON — Mayor Kathy Whitmire, elected 18 months ago with significant gay support, is in hot fiscal waters in her hometown, according to the *New York Times*.

Sanitation workers and police have staged noisy disruptive demonstrations lately, protesting work rules and pay increase limits. A \$2.3 billion transit system bond issue was overwhelmingly defeated and she has laid off 400 city employees because of the budget deficit.

On top of all this, Whitmire is under fire for having budgeted \$88,000 to collect data and mount an education program to fight AIDS in Houston. There are 25 cases of AIDS in that city, which has a sizable gay male population.



mock die-in part of july 4 peace extravaganza

BOSTON — If you're in Waterfront Park on July 4, keep your eyes peeled for a mock die-in to commemorate the deaths of women in the nuclear attack on Hiroshima. The die-in is just one event of a peace extravaganza sponsored by the Boston Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice. A rally begins at 10 a.m. on the Common, followed by a march to Waterfront Park. It's all for a nuke-free Boston Harbor and in solidarity with the Women's Peace Encampment at Seneca, NY, which opens on the same day.

task force and reagan aides discuss a.i.d.s. funding

WASHINGTON — In a meeting to press for more AIDS funding, representatives of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF), the head of the AIDS/KS Foundation, a man with AIDS and Reagan administration aides conferred on June 21.

The meeting was originally slated to take place at the Old Executive Office Building, but was moved to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). A White House spokesman said the move was only made to accommodate HHS officials, and had nothing to do with squeamishness about members of the gay community meeting with Reagan aides, according to the *Washington Blade*.

Representing NGTF were Virginia Apuzzo, the executive director, and Jeff Levi, director of the Washington office. Dr. Marcus Conant of the AIDS/KS Foundation of San Francisco and Michael Callen, the co-founder of Gay Men with AIDS were also present. Representing the administration were Judi Buckalew, a Reagan aide on health matters, and Thomas Donnelly, assistant secretary of health for legislative affairs and two other HHS officials.

Apuzzo and Levi told the Reagan aides that \$100 million is needed in fiscal year 1984 to fight AIDS. Apuzzo also requested a meeting between NGTF and HHS secretary Margaret Heckler.

Callen also pressed for more AIDS funding, saying "I am who you are talking about."

girth and mirth

NEW YORK — The Girth and Mirth Club, host of a July 4th weekend convention for gay male chubbies and their friends was formed in 1978 to provide a social setting where fat gay men can meet without the threat of ridicule. The club is managed by a board of directors elected by its membership of 300. The club issues a monthly newsletter with a completely confidential mailing list. For more information, write the Girth and Mirth Club, c/o DMS, Box 513, 132 W. 24th St., NY, NY 10011.



'grey lady' to be scorned

NEW YORK — A boycott of the *New York Times* has been called for Sunday, July 3 by a group called Operation "Fit to Print." In advertisements in gay/lesbian publications and in an article in the *New York Post*, the group is urging that people boycott the *Times* that day to tell them "we exist and that our concerns are fit to print."

Originally scheduled for Sunday, June 19, the boycott was changed to July 3 so that it would take place on the Sunday after the gay pride march, at which organizers hoped to gather petition signatures and support for the boycott.

In an ad, Operation "Fit to Print" said "'All the News That's Fit to Print,' the *New York Times* puts its mandate on every front page. But when it comes to news of the gay and lesbian community, its silence is deafening. . . . Imagine what will happen if every gay and lesbian who reads the *Times* — just this once — doesn't".

a.i.d.s. notes

A private medical foundation has been established to support scientists in their research efforts to determine the causes of, treatments and preventative measures for AIDS. The New York-based AIDS Medical Foundation will be headed by virologist Dr. Joseph A. Sonnabend. Initial funding has been contributed by the Mathilde and Arthur B. Krim Foundation.

The AIDS Medical Foundation will seek funding from the government, private individuals and corporate donors. The Foundation's chairman (sic) Dr. Mathilde Krim, said, "Our intention is to see that the maximum possible proportion of contributions received will go directly to research. Overhead and staff expenses will be kept to a minimum."

Bishop Paul Moore, Jr. of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, spoke at a New York press conference called to warn against AIDS panic. Moore said, "Underneath the panic about AIDS itself is an unresolved anger and fear and a looking down upon the gay community and the Haitian community."

Funeral directors in New York state who are refusing to embalm the bodies of persons who die of AIDS could lose their licenses under legislation introduced on June 22, according to the *New York Daily News*. The bill was introduced by Gov. Mario Cuomo as part of a program for adequate care and dignified burial for people with AIDS.

Recently, a state association of undertakers recommended that its members refuse to embalm the bodies of people who died of AIDS until the government establishes guidelines for safe handling of the bodies. Although it was pointed out that the same procedures used in the embalming of bodies of people who died of hepatitis B would be adequate protection from AIDS, the association has not changed its recommendation.

Several major blood banks are reporting a drop in donations which they attribute to a "national hysteria" about AIDS, according to the *Washington Post*. A center in Detroit reported a 33% drop, in New York a 12% drop, and in Chicago a 10% drop. An official at the Southeast Chapter of the American Red Cross in Detroit described supplies as "critically low."

But Will We Be Less Vulnerable?

AIDS Lobby and Education Project Proposed

By Debi Law

DENVER — As another example of the gay community's leadership role in dealing with the AIDS crisis, health care workers and organizers at the AIDS Forum in Denver outlined a national agenda with a specific plan of action. And representatives of 38 national and local AIDS-related organizations established a federation of groups doing AIDS work.

The purpose of the national group is "to include information-sharing at all levels, [to avoid] duplicative efforts and [to formulate] policy guidelines for unified action nationwide." The federation is now being directed by an interim steering committee, composed of representatives from seven city-based AIDS organizations: one each from Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Denver, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Houston; the following national organizations: National Gay Health Education Foundation (NGHEF), National Gay Task Force (NGTF), the newly formed Women's AIDS Network, and AAPHR; and three persons with AIDS.

Two federation projects undertaken immediately are the establishment of an office to lobby for AIDS-related research funds and the establishment of a resources and information clearinghouse.

The AIDS federation's lobbying project, with a planned annual budget of \$200,000 was created to coordinate the effort to produce additional congressional allocations for AIDS research. The Washington-based project is a cooperative effort of the newly-formed AIDS federation, NGTF, and the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL). GRNL's AIDS lobbying task force will act in a supportive role to the soon-to-be-hired AIDS federation lobbyist.

News Analysis

Paul Popham, president and chairperson of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York told the political strategies workshop that the creation of a lobbying project to hire the AIDS lobbyist was the single-most important piece of work to be done. It was stated several times throughout the weekend that the lobbying effort would proceed with or without the federation.

Governor Flipflops On AIDS Funding Bill

By Bob Nelson

ALBANY — While gay people were showing their pride in New York City, state officials were performing political somersaults on funding for AIDS research.

In Albany, the Thursday before the march, Gov. Mario Cuomo said that he would be unable to support a \$5.25 million funding bill that had passed the state Senate by a vote of 54-0. "It's a very good bill if you have the \$5 million," Cuomo said. "I don't have it. It's not there."

Just the day before, Cuomo had released a report by a state task force on AIDS and had agreed with the report's recommendations for expanded laboratory facilities and patient care, increased public education and monitoring the blood supplies to ensure that AIDS is not transmitted by transfusion.

Later on Thursday, in comments about a newly-founded private foundation, the AIDS Medical Foundation, Cuomo described AIDS as "a savage killer that struck at us without warning and which is destroying hundreds of people without mercy."

Since leaders of the state



Virginia Apuzzo applauds a group of men with AIDS for a moving presentation at the Gay Health Conference.

The \$200,000 to be raised nationally will pay the salary of a professional lobbyist, a support staff of three persons and office expenses. GMHC pledged \$40,000 for the first year, with NGTF agreeing to raise \$20,000. The remaining seven steering committee members pledged from \$10 to \$20 thousand to the project. There was no question about the ability to raise the needed capital.

The federation's resource/information project was outlined in a separate resolution. Established for municipal AIDS groups, the project will assist in the sharing of information and expertise. Ron Vachon, executive director of NGHEF, is to be hired as the interim director and will develop a budget and long-range plans for the educational arm of the AIDS federation. Vachon is to make recommendations to the permanent steering committee of the AIDS federation at their August meeting in New York City.

Two special interest networks that formed during the forum and conference had a profound effect on the course of the weekend and perhaps even the future of AIDS work. In a mutually supportive atmosphere the Women's AIDS Network and the persons with AIDS group asserted that they need to be represented in organizations and in positions of leadership both nationally and locally.

Michael Callan, founder of Gay Men with AIDS in New York City applauded the involvement of women because they offer "encouragement and hope."

Assembly said they would not act on the AIDS bill until money could be found for it, Cuomo's opposition effectively stalled the legislation, which would provide \$4.5 million in research grants, \$600,000 in community assistance grants for AIDS people, and \$150,000 for public education. An AIDS institute to examine funding proposals would be created independently of the lethargic state Department of Health, which had made no request for AIDS funding in its 1983 budget. And an AIDS advisory council would disperse funds for public education and community service, to address, for example, fears among prison guards that they might contract AIDS from prisoners and the refusal of a state's morticians association to handle the bodies of AIDS victims.

The sponsor of the bill, Sen. Roy Goodman, (R-Manhattan) issued a press release detailing the possible areas of the \$31 billion state budget that could be tapped for funding, including \$4.5 million governmental emergencies, \$8 million for new cars for state officials, \$1 million for TV ads pro-

The women who founded the network want to ensure that women working on AIDS will have access to information and contribute to national strategies.

They stated in the founding resolution, "As women, lesbian and heterosexual, we have much to share, much to offer, much to teach, [and] much to learn. Women, as community and health activists, have coordinated successful strategies to establish grassroots educational and service organizations. We have a history of working within and challenging the health care system. We encourage men to learn from our experience and call on them to deal with their sexism as we work together."

One of the proposed actions of the network is to "involve the lesbian and feminist communities in the AIDS issue and to encourage and promote [their] active participation in local organizations."

It is quite obvious that the gay white men who are directing the AIDS movement, many doctors among them, have never been health activists or cut out of the health care system. Women have long been victimized by the medical establishment and, in a creative response, have formed institutions, networks and shared skills to demystify health care and challenge medical practice and philosophy. Gay men have for the most part not done this. Due to class options and male privilege many have not recognized the pathological nature of the health

care system. Apolitical and political men are now reacting to a crisis with energy and commitment, yet seemingly void of an analysis that will make the gay community less vulnerable to the medical system when this crisis has passed.

Persons with AIDS at the conference, gay men from New York, San Francisco and Denver, challenged some of the directions now being taken. Speaking with dignity and passion throughout the weekend, they reminded everyone that the AIDS fight is a battle for lives, not turf.

To the distress of many men with AIDS, they were not included in the Forum/Conference planning. It would seem that to have the most effective strategy, those most affected by it must be involved in developing it. While the leaders of the AIDS movement demand this from other organizations and in others' decision making, it has been slow in coming from within. If, as Ginny Apuzzo, executive director of NGTF, said in her closing speech, "Men with AIDS are the trailblazers," then the pioneers are on the wrong path.

Sex is a much-discussed adjunct to AIDS and this forum was no exception. A theme reiterated by several lesbians in attendance was the need for women to deal with a moralistic aversion to and a disgust with many of the sexual mores and practices of gay men. At a time of division within the lesbian and feminist communities about all things sexual, gay men are questioning their sexual practices.

There is sentiment among men for denouncing their casual/anonymous/many-partnered post-

Stonewall sex in reaction to the AIDS crisis, setting the stage for polarization of the men's community as well. A gay and/or feminist moral minority is not what is needed, but rather an expansion of a continuum of many sexual styles and habits.

The larger conference incorporated some "AIDS 101" workshops into a format of health concerns for the entire community. Lesbians and gay health care workers attended workshops on donor insemination, lesbian and gay adolescence and alcohol and chemical dependency.

The "baby boomette" has not bypassed the gay community, as a pregnant dyke, a gay father, parental hopefuls and community activists discussed creative ways to fulfill the desire to parent.

During the lesbian caucus, the need for more time to address the specific health concerns of lesbians led to a proposed lesbian forum to be held in conjunction with the 1984 conference. The need for more time was discussed, as well as more dynamic workshops about sex, sexually transmitted diseases, skill-sharing and the lesbian health movement, and mental health and social/economic concerns.

This year's lesbian component paled in comparison to the AIDS forum and other portions of the conference. The timeliness and intensity of AIDS as an issue was a factor. And yet the challenge to confront formative health issues and to create structures necessary to define and meet lesbian health needs must be met by lesbians. What better place to do that than the 1984 Gay/Lesbian Health Conference, scheduled for June 16-19 in New York City?

Man Gay Bashed Near Bars

By Jil Clark

PROVIDENCE, RI — A gay man who was beaten up recently in the vicinity of two gay bars here is pressing charges against his assailants.

Six white men, all about 20 years of age, assaulted Glenn Sheldon outside of the Deja Vu and the Mirror Bar on the night on June 21, Sheldon said.

The men followed Sheldon yelling, "Are you a faggot?" Then one of them punched Sheldon in the face, knocked him to the ground, and kicked him in the stomach and face.

Sheldon was treated for a broken nose at a nearby hospital.

An arrest warrant has been issued for the man suspected of doing most of the beating, according to Detective Joseph McNulty.

Sheldon said that the number of assaults in this area, which is near the downtown mall, "has increased three-fold since summer began ... but no case has come to court because no one is willing to testify."

"Police told me that every Friday and Saturday night gay men are attacked outside of Deja Vu and the Mirror bar," Sheldon added.

"People in the bathroom [of the Mirror Bar] where I ran [after the assault] were all aware of [the problem with] queer bashers. They talked about two particular groups — one which is all white, another which is all black," said Sheldon.

McNulty confirmed that many gay men are assaulted in the area, although he said he could not tell if the violence is increasing or if "we're just more aware of it." He said he has heard no reports of two "gangs" like those Sheldon described.

McNulty continued, "It isn't so much preying on what you would call 'gay people.' It's just that [in taking the shortest route from the

parking spaces to the bars], you're going down an alley where there is some construction going on and the lighting isn't that good. Anybody putting themselves in a situation like that is vulnerable."

A gay man, who said he is not the owner of the Mirror Bar although several employees and patrons refer to him as such, agreed with McNulty. The man, who asked that his name not be printed, added that the assailants have probably surmised that gay men are relatively safe targets because they are unlikely to report the assault for fear of getting publicity which would associate them with the gay bars.

Sheldon blames the worsening of the situation on the non-response of the bar owners and employees. He said the bartender at the Mirror bar the night he was beaten refused to phone a friend for him or call the police.

The Mirror Bar employee told GCN that he saw a man whose face was "covered with blood run in the door and in the men's room ... but he didn't approach anybody there for help."

"We wouldn't be reluctant to call the police," he said, then added, "Any establishment — gay or straight — has to be concerned with [calling the police too much]. We've seen state licenses be revoked because of the number of calls they have to a police force."

The employee also said that he has "already tried to get more protection" for people walking in the area. More police have been patrolling the neighborhood on foot in the last month," he said. "But we're not in a position to be too demanding. We're not the most welcome tenants anywhere in town."

— filed from Boston

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Speaking Out

The CIA-CDC-AIDS Political Alliance

By Charley Shively

The call has gone out to increase federal funding for AIDS research. While we all want to know more about what causes AIDS and how to stop it, we need to scrutinize such institutions as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The Centers for Disease Control cannot be trusted. In 1932, they began an experiment on six hundred Black men, which was only discontinued when the press uncovered their crime in 1972. (Caspar Weinberger was then HEW Secretary.) Four hundred of the Black men were watched to see what the effects of untreated syphilis would be on their mortality rate; the other two hundred were used as "control subjects." Even after the "experiment's" rapid termination in 1972, treatment for the surviving men was delayed almost a year. The Centers for Disease Control, as one newspaper reported, "sees the poor, the black, the illiterate and the defenseless in American society as a vast experimental resource for the government" (James H. Jones, *Bad Blood; the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*, 1981).

But the CDC has been hardly more trustworthy in dealing with straight white people. In 1976—after Gerald Ford had pardoned Nixon and needed to refurbish his own election campaign—the politicians attempted to restore faith in the government by creating a Swine Flu Panic. (They had planned an epidemic.) When their flu vaccine began killing people, their political ploy flopped and the Swine Flu Crusade dropped into the dustbin of history with the Ford. But in the process, the drug companies who manufactured the vaccine made a good profit, which they shared with the Republican Party.

There is, however, a frightening likelihood that AIDS has been funded all along by the federal government. If the theory of Jane Teas (Harvard School of Public Health) is correct that AIDS is caused by a virus related to the African Swine Fever Virus, then there is evidence that the CIA itself is responsible for introducing the disease in the western hemisphere. A *Newsday* article reprinted in the *Boston Globe* (1/9/77) reports that CIA operatives received the virus at Ft. Gulick (a CIA biological warfare training station in Panama), then travelled to Navassa (a U.S. controlled island just off the coast of Haiti) and then to Guantanamo—the U.S. naval base on the island of Cuba—where the virus was spread to Cuban pigs. From there it spread to the Dominican Republic (1978), to Haiti (1979) and reappeared in Cuba in 1980. According to James E. D'Eramo, the African Swine Fever Virus in Haiti initially "killed 80 to 100 per cent of the pigs in a given location, but as it spread from one pig feeding lot to another the mortality rate of the pigs decreased to a mere 3 per cent." Currently, according to Dr. Teas, "the Canadian, Mexican and U.S. governments are in the process of destroying the pig population of Haiti in an attempt to control the current African Swine Fever Virus infection, with the United States footing the 18 million dollar bill." (*N.Y. Native*, #64) Would it be possible—that given \$100 million—the

doctors would just decide to kill all the queers, Haitians, and IV drug users exposed to AIDS?

The African Swine Fever Virus theory would suggest that the CIA effort in Cuba got out of control, spread to Haiti and then to people. A newly published book—Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman, *A Higher Form of Killing, The Secret Story of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, 1982—suggests a more sinister possibility. In their epilogue, the authors point out that chemical and biological warfare and research continue in the United States under the Department of "Defense"—known as the "Department of War" before 1947. The current one and a half trillion dollars allocated for war leaves plenty of room for circumventing the rules of international law. In testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations in 1969, a military spokesman explained: "Within the next 5 or 10 years, it would probably be possible to make a new infective micro-organism which could differ in certain important respects from any known disease-causing organisms. Most important of these is that it might be refractory to the immunological and therapeutic processes upon which we depend to maintain our relative freedom from infectious disease." Further a 1975 military manual promises forthcoming "'ethnic chemical weapons' which would be designed to exploit naturally occurring differences in vulnerability among specific population groups" (pp.240-41). AIDS sounds just like such an ethnic weapon which knocks out the immunological defences of the individual. Certainly if such research has been pursued in the Department of War/Defense, they must already know a lot about how to turn on and off the immunological defenses. The U.S. military attitude towards lesbians and gay men should be well known: they claim we are unfit for service.

The difficulty with AIDS is only superficially medical. True, we don't know the cause or the treatment for the disease. But for syphilis we do know the cause and we do have an effective treatment and have had since the 1940s. For religious reasons the disease has been retained in order to punish people for their sexual liberties. We allow this atrocity to continue because too many people feel that what they call "promiscuity" inevitably leads to its own punishment—death, disease and destruction. The CDC doctors (all white men) called it "Bad Blood" and some even after the revelations of 1972 believed they had been smeared by the press despite the good work they were doing.

Instead of checking out the CIA, the CDC or the medical-pharmacological establishment, too many gay people readily surrender to the lie that our sexuality is crippling us. They say our sex is adolescent, compulsive, retarded, irresponsible, sinful and dreadful. Such teaching has encouraged the spread of syphilis and such teaching will surely impair our struggle against AIDS.

Thank You, Boston

By Marsha Levine

For the first time in the four years that I have actively worked on the Boston Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee, I finally got to march in my own parade. It's a totally indescribable feeling to relate when you hear the bells chime at the Arlington Street Church, see the balloons float down on Charles Street, and experience the welcoming of the crowd on the overpass as you step onto Cambridge Street.

These are the moments that cause me to reflect and create a mental list of thank you's, as well as give me a great sense of pride and unity. I began to think had it not been for the extra-hard efforts of small and brand new bars, our fundraising attempts would have suffered. Had it not been for the generosity of some of the businesses in our community, some essentials would have been missing this year. Had it not been for the support and strength of the members of the committee, the burden would have once again rested on the shoulders of just a few. Had it not been for the aid and cooperation of Brian McNaught, the Mayor's liaison to the Lesbian/Gay Community; Katy Finn, Traffic and Parking Department; and Michael Wasserman, Mayor's Office of Public Celebrations; the process and structure of our event may have been impeded. And of course, had it not been for the 18,000 or more lesbians, gay men, their friends, and/or their families that came out on Saturday, June 18, the day would have been a total failure and wasted effort.

The Boston Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee owes many, many thanks to tons of others, and it will do so individually, but mostly we are curious to hear your response to the events during the two weeks, the celebration day, and the changes that were made along the way. Please send us a letter to Pride, P.O. Box 1253, Back Back Annex, Boston, MA 02117, or attend our year-round meetings (time and places to be announced). Next year promises to be even more exciting as we enter into a national celebration of 15 years of Stonewall. At the 2nd Annual Lesbian/Gay Pride Coordinators Conference in San Diego on October 8-9, representatives from nearly 70 cities will be discussing how we can all make the 1984 Celebration an important and highly visible event. Your input at the Boston Committee meetings will mold what we contribute on a national basis. For more information about the Conference, or the committee meetings, please feel free to call 262-4777 and leave a message.

And again, thank you for making this our biggest, our best, our most ambitious Lesbian/Gay Pride Weeks ever!

Community Voices

"friends"

Dear GCN:

Every year, at every Lesbian and Gay Pride March, at least one straight man or woman attempts to mar our day with a variety of sidewalk antics: yelling "straight is great," or "straight is right," or "back in the closets faggots," are just a few of the epithets I've heard thrown at us over the years. This year our parade was again marred by the presence of a straight person but this year he was marching with us, disguised as a "friend."

Several years ago this straight "friend," while employed as an Assistant District Attorney under Garrett Byrne and then Newman Flanagan, tacitly approved through silence, the oppression, harassment and destruction of well over 100 gay men's lives. The great majority of these lives were destroyed when they were arrested for "looking" gay. The *Herald American* sealed the gay men's fate when they printed their names, addresses and places of employment in the paper.

I can't help but wonder how these gay men felt, last Saturday, watching this "friend" campaign in our march, directly behind the BL/GPA contingent. Likewise, I cannot help but wonder how these many gay men felt as they watched two of their gay brothers carrying this new "friend's" banner. What in the hell has become of our struggle?

By allowing this "friend" to march in our parade we gave approval to an active supporter of Garrett Byrne, Ed King and Newman Flanagan to continue to pursue the gay vote even though his past record proves he is unworthy of it. A handful of gay people have labelled him a "strong, experienced, effective voice for Boston's Gay and Lesbian Community." Was he any of these things when his bosses, the DA's, were destroying gay men's lives?

Our pride has been tarnished in the past; it's time for us to remove the stains.

David Jean
Boston, MA

S^uSTaIN

"Speaking Out" is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us and we encourage you to respond to any ideas expressed in this space. Submissions to "Speaking Out" should be TYPED and DOUBLE SPACED, and, if possible, held to under 5 pages in length. The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" do not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper, the staff or the advertisers. Write c/o Speaking Out, GCN, 167 Tremont St., 5th Fl., Boston, MA 02111

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The 1983 Gay Community News Sustainer Program Your pledge (minimum \$120 per year) brings you:

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- the quarterly sustainer newsletter
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Reclaiming Power Lesbian S/M Forum

By Jil Clark



"Some feminists will tell you that this culture breeds and supports s/m. The opposite seems true to me. . . . S/m sexuality is a deliberate mutual creation from your deepest emotions, planned and executed for pleasure. This is totally different from the sexuality I was taught: accidental, inflicted on one person by another, mechanical, shameful. I have reclaimed my power by reclaiming my rightful sexuality."

Beryl Hoffstein made this remark at Boston's first lesbian s/m forum, held on June 19, during Lesbian and Gay Pride Weeks. She was one of several women from the Boston Area Lesbian S/M Group and from Urania, an s/m group for lesbians and bisexual women, who spoke about their pleasure and their politics at the Sunday afternoon gathering. The panel and discussion which followed were open to all women who are involved in or curious about lesbian s/m.

The setting for this long-awaited event was a classroom of the University of Massachusetts in downtown Boston — an unlikely place to hold a discussion of lesbian sadomasochism. By one o'clock, about thirty women of varying degrees of knowledge about — and support for — s/m had filed quietly into the room. Most seemed a little anxious — or maybe they were just uncomfortable sitting in those one-armed plastic chairs (designed for assiduous note takers) — as they faced the dusty blackboard.

Ann Crisafulli, a member of the lesbian s/m group who facilitated the forum, began by requesting that all present express their opinions without attacking one another and that no one make references to "scenes" involving male partners.

Because the room was available for only three hours, there was insufficient time for a thorough discussion of any one aspect of lesbian s/m. The forum was only a tantalizing beginning. The range of topics touched upon was broad: safety; limits — pushing some and not others; the need for a new language to talk about the nexus of

pleasure and pain; women growing comfortable with power. Women also exchanged thoughts about working out in scenes power imbalances or anger that are ongoing in relationships, and whether there are some symbols and scenarios that are not acceptable because of what they mean in the non-fantasy world — moreover, just how disconnected is the fantasy "scene" from the way we live the rest of our lives?

Half of the six women who spoke at the beginning asked to remain anonymous. One gave a brief account of her finally coming to terms with her masochism; the tale sounded much like a lesbian "coming out" story. As an adult she realized at last that the games she played with friends in grade school were "working out s/m fantasies." She hid her sexuality from herself until a few years ago, at which point she still thought she was "the only lesbian in Massachusetts with s/m fantasies. . . . So I'm here today because it is important that other women have support."

This woman, who works in a nearly all-male environment doing what is still widely considered to be a man's job, said that being a "bottom" in her sex life is a welcome relief from how she must live the rest of her life: "Most of the time in control. . . because men are on top. . . and I can't give men in this world even an inch."

"At a fantasy level with a lover, I can lose control — but I still have control over when to stop. In the real world I wouldn't have that control. I think that's why I'm into it."

"It doesn't mean I'm a weak person, that I want people to walk all over me. It means I have the strength to give that up for awhile."

Hoffstein also spoke about the strength and insight she has gained by playing with power in sex.

"One of the fears I have always had about expressing my submissive side is that it would undermine my strength. The popular myth has it that the masochist is a masochist everywhere — on the street, in the bedroom, in the

supermarket. On the contrary, I have found myself feeling better about myself, stronger in asking for what I want and less likely to give my power up unless I want to. . . . (H)aving played with power I feel more at home with it. . . . (I)n the past, like most women I had been taught that power is evil, to be wielded over others or to be feared. Now I can see it as neither good nor evil in itself and I trust myself to use it for good."

Joanna Lancaster, a Urania member, talked about limits and her "adventure factor."

"There are supposed limits and real ones — inner and outer ones — and they do a lot of moving around in my experience. As top, I myself don't want to deal with piercing, though I might make small marks like a brand if it fits my partner's scene. If she was really into piercing it might be that someday I'd try it. . . ."

"As bottom I have certain limits, too. For example, you don't get me into a situation where I'm afraid of falling or being hit in the head, because I'll freak out and lose all feeling of being in an erotic scene. . . . (I) call these lateral limits because they form a boundary beyond which I simply wouldn't go and if I did I would be turned off, not on."

"But I have what I call vertical limits, too. These have to do with the intensity or sometimes the location of certain things — and they're much more flexible than other limits. They are where much of the action is, where one of the greatest chances for adventure resides."

"One such limit is the point when you are sure you can't take any spanking or whipping. . . . (A) safe word . . . is reserved for emergencies, and a painfully spanked rear doesn't constitute an emergency. The space between this condition of feeling pushed to the limit and the real limit where you would actually be turned off is what I'm calling the adventure factor. . . ."

"So the top takes this information and then, depending on her own mood and condition and what

she knows about her partner. . . decides whether to stop right then, to push on a bit further or to push on a lot more. This leeway is her own adventure factor. The bottom can have the ecstasy of finding that there is irrefutably another will in the world besides her own, the top, the ecstasy of experiencing her own will as unrefusable."

The panelists spoke for only about half an hour. The rest of the afternoon belonged to the other women in the room. Some asked for advice, others talked about their own experiences.

The first women to speak talked about guilt. "I've been thinking about s/m for 12 to 13 years and I'm just getting into it. Guilt has been a big question for me."

One woman suggested that she switch roles. Another told her to "remember this is what the other person wants — it's pleasure, not pain. . . . (W)e need another word that doesn't sound like stubbing your toe."

Crisafulli suggested using "heightened sensation" in place of "pain."

Later, when someone expressed doubts about the possibility of violence being consensual, Crisafulli said that, again, the problem lies with our language, "To me, violence is non-consensual and isn't pleasure."

A few women disagreed. "I think s/m can be violent," said one woman. "If everything that is violent is okay, then it is okay for a therapist to give pills to a suicidal person in a moment of passion. If somebody has an orgasm because you stab them in the heart, it may be pleasurable for the moment, but. . ."

Several women bristled at this, and responded angrily, "I see no parallel between suicide and sexual pleasure. . . I resent your remarks. I am a grown person and I know what is in my best interest sexually."

Tension dissipated rapidly, and the discussion moved on. A woman said she worried that, "in the heat of passion," she'd lose her common sense and hurt her partner. "If I lose control, will things twist?"

Beth, one of the panelists, responded, "In sports, when you're learning to spar, you learn how much you could hurt someone — on purpose or by accident. It's the same doing a scene. I have to be so totally there that, if it's really noisy outside, I won't notice until the scene is over. I'm aware only of her breathing, the tone of her voice, the way she moves, how much strain is in her voice — or in her body if she's in bondage."

Women also discussed whether they ever tried to work out in s/m play on-going power imbalances in their relationships with their lovers.

"When I'm in a scene, I'm doing sex, I'm not doing therapy," said a member of the lesbian s/m group. "If I'm playing a scene in which I'm punishing my lover for flirting with someone in the bar when I wanted her attention, for example, and I get really angry or really insecure, as a top it's my job to stop the scene. . . so that I'm actually working out my jealousy in that scene."

Another woman said she uses s/m differently. "It can be a way of letting go of hurt and anger once you've figured out what's going on. I couldn't take a completely unresolved situation into a scene and feel comfortable with it. . . but after talking over a problem to the point that we agree what's happened, replaying it in a scene takes care of residual emotional stuff."

Another woman said that she believes s/m may be the *only* way to lessen power imbalances that are rooted in our culture. "If you're relating to somebody with more class privilege, then there's this power dynamic there that could be worked out really well in a scene."

"I'm getting a little uncomfortable with. . . a separation being made between politics and s/m," she added. "I'm not involved in s/m. . . but I think s/m can really [be used for progressive ends.] Working with power on a sexual fantasy level in s/m we can really do something positive."

This remark was followed by a discussion of whether political

Continued on page 11

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The Eugenie Beal Committee, 35 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston 02108



GCN: The First Ten Years

Volume 9 1981-1982

Summary of Volume 9 by
Larry Goldsmith and Nancy Wechsler

1981-1982 were mixed years for lesbians and gay men. We were under attack both from the government and the New Right. There were raids on bars and baths in Toronto as well as in Boston (at the Loft and the Quagmire). In Canada The Body Politic was dragged through another trial and then brought up on more charges of obscenity. An FBI crackdown on the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) went into full gear and here in Boston the straight press sensationalized the arrests of Tom Reeves and Michael Thompson on charges that were later dropped with considerably less fanfare from the press. An early morning raid at Framingham Prison disrupted life at the women's prison, and Susan Saxe was portrayed by the straight press as the ring leader of a "drug and gambling operation." When the dust settled and the frame-up fell apart, and all the charges were dropped, you could read about it in GCN or in the back of the Boston Globe in small print. Chris Madsen lost her job at the Christian Science Monitor; shortly thereafter, church officials fired gay administrator Jim Ogan; and Merle Woo lost her job at the University of California, Berkeley. Gay fathers and lesbian mothers fought in the courts for custody of their children. During this period June Arnold, Margot Karle, and Jeanette Howard Foster died.

VOL. 9, NO. 45 June 5, 1982 60¢
Gay Community News
THE WEEKLY FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MALES BIPAD: 65498



Poland and East Germany

Legalized Homosexuality vs. Gay Liberation

And yet there were some ground breaking victories and positive moments for all of us. Wisconsin passed the first state-wide gay civil rights bill. The Heresies collective put out their now-famous "Sex Issue," bringing to the fore questions and debates around sex and sexuality. The Feminist and the Scholar Conference at Barnard College stirred up much debate and controversy around sex, pornography, s/m, sex roles and sexuality. GCN played its own role in the sex debate by printing a two-part interview with Gayle Rubin and Pat Califia on The New Right and Sexual Repression, and Sadomasochism. We reprinted Joan Nestle's speech at the Barnard Conference as a Speaking Out entitled The Fem Question, Or We Will Not Go Away. Michael Bronski and Nancy Wechsler each wrote articles on pornography and together did a dialogue on the movie Taxi zum Klo. We printed Ron Fowler's famous Barbed Wire Cock cover to illustrate a review of a book on repressed male sexuality.

Susan Saxe was released from Framingham prison after spending seven years in jail for her participation in a bank robbery stemming from her involvement in the Anti-Vietnam War movement. Having survived and grown, she held on to her political commitment throughout her time in

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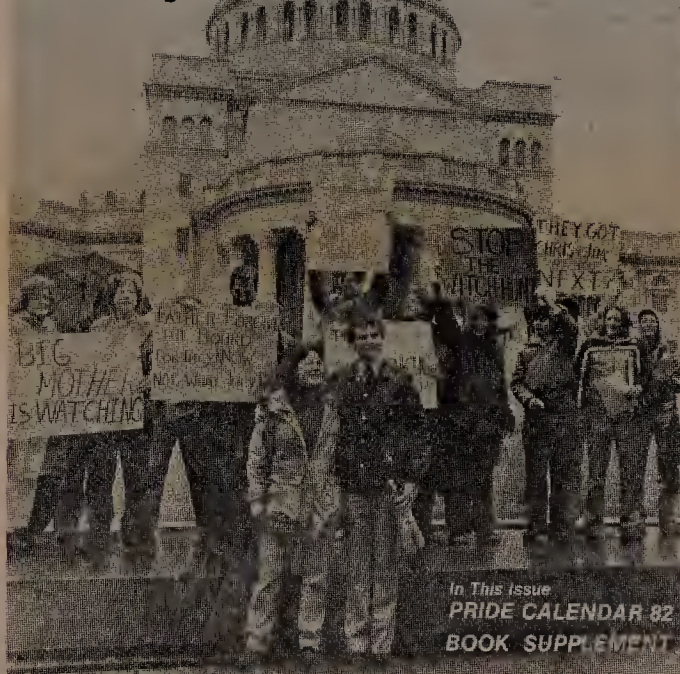
prison and is still a political activist today. I think the media loves to pick up on people from the '60s and '70s who were political at one time and then got involved in something really off base. . . . The media forget that there are many of us who were political and committed at that time and who are political and committed now. . . . (Susan Saxe in No. 44)

In that same issue the Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance announced its formation in a Speaking Out.

VOL. 9, NO. 47 June 19, 1982 60¢
Gay Community News
THE WEEKLY FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MALES BIPAD: 65498

Protest Targets

"Mother Church"



GCN went international with coverage of movements and gay life in Australia, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, East Germany, France, Mexico, Nicaragua and Poland.

The prisoner project started a monthly column in the paper called "The Other Side of the Wall", where prisoners' writing added depth and filled a gap in GCN's coverage of our community.

People of color were more visible in Volume 9. GCN increased and improved its coverage with news, features, book reviews and speaking outs, including such topics as the Second National Third World Conference, Black and White Men Together, Asian and Gay beginning to work it out, Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians, Daniel Tsang's speech Third World Lesbians and Gay Men: Challenges for the Eighties, and interview with Audre Lorde and interviews with the editors of But Some of us are Brave: Black Women's Studies — Barbara Smith and Patricia Bell Scott.

GCN continued its tradition of covering gay people's involvement in other movements and struggles. This year it seemed to focus on the anti-militarist movement, the abortion rights movement, and organizing around unions and work place issues.

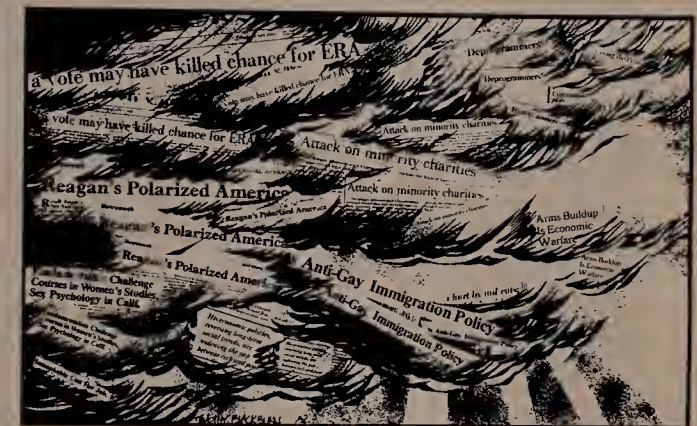
As the anti-militarist, anti-nuke movement built up steam, GCN covered gay and lesbian participation in-

cluding articles on Women and Militarism (No. 19), the Women's Pentagon Action (No. 25), the March 27 demonstration against U.S. involvement in El Salvador (No. 37), protests at Livermore Laboratory in California (No. 50) and of course the massive June 12 demonstration in New York at the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament, featured on our cover (No. 48).

Many things have changed in the last ten years — at GCN, in the lesbian and gay community, and in the world at large. GCN has striven to stay abreast of those changes, and has often worked to make them happen. In this ten part series, we want to share some of the history of GCN, its role in Boston, and its relationship to the lesbian and gay movement in this country.

Issue Number 50, which hit the streets just before an arsonist destroyed the Bromfield Street office, included the New Right Book Supplement and a cover photo and story on a march on Boston police headquarters to "eliminate the Vice Squad."

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In addition to coverage of Lesbian and Gay Pride marches around the country, we wrote an editorial urging readers to attend the July 17 rally at Cherry Hill, N.J. to demand abortion rights and oppose "Right-to-Life" groups. In that editorial the GCN staff wrote:

The same climate that has resulted in raids on gay bookstores, porn shops, bars, and cruising areas has produced the renewal of anti-abortion sentiment and the glorification of a concept of 'family' that never really existed. The same establishment which promotes the idea that gay men who get 'gay diseases' deserve them, promotes the idea that women who get pregnant deserve the economic and psychological penalties of raising a child they do not want or cannot support. The message from all quarters is: control your sexuality, or we will control it for you.

VOL. 9, NO. 50 July 16, 1982 60¢
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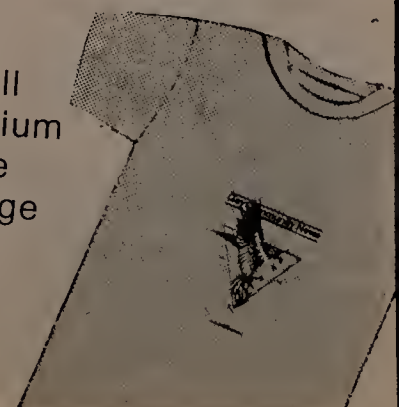
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GAY PR

By Sue Hyde

Whether you were one of the thousands of queers going with the formidable flow in San Francisco or one of the pioneering 500 in Burlington, Vermont claiming gay space for the first time, Lesbian and Gay Pride day is the one day of the year when you march and listen, munch and flirt in a totally queer environment. As much a day for soothing the social beast as well as the political, Pride Day was observed between June 9 and June 26, depending upon local schedules. Rallies and marches are the order of the day, of course, but gay men and lesbians were equally proud at dances, parties, brunches, teas, receptions, films, screenings, religious services, foot races, picnics and drag shows. It was all in honor of the scruffy dykes and drag queens who became street fighters on the night of June 27, 1969 in Greenwich Village at the Stonewall Inn.

The largest single event in the country was **San Francisco's** thirteenth annual Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day. Police estimates put the crowd at 200,000, but Konstantin Berlandt, co-chair of the organizing committee, told *GCN* that his guess was 400,000 people.

The parade was dedicated to "People with AIDS: Those Who Have Died and Those Surviving." A group of AIDS people was the first contingent in a procession of 200 plus floats and contingents and thousands of individual marchers.

Berlandt said the annual event had received a "tremendous amount of publicity, most of it negative, because of AIDS." He said the crowd, the largest ever at the San Francisco event, might have been much bigger except for the AIDS-related press reports.

Despite the unresolved legal status of gay/lesbian immigration, the organizers were able to secure unobstructed passage to the U.S. for two Norwegian lesbians and a gay man from Nicaragua. Due to a late grant received from the Vanguard Foundation, Wenche Lowzow, a lesbian member of Norway's Parliament, Kim Friele, a Norwegian lesbian activist, and Roberto Gurdian of Nicaragua all addressed the Freedom Day rally.

Berlandt stressed the participation of people of color, both on the stage and in the audience. And, in a reference to the AIDS crisis, he pledged that "in the face of adversity, we'll come out and come out strong."

Burlington, Vermont, (see article page one) and **Berkeley, California** were the sites of first-ever pride marches. Berkeley mustered a crowd of 800 on June 19 and sampled the political fare of groups ranging from an East Bay Democratic club to the Gay American Indians.

Two thousand gay men and lesbians marched behind a banner urging, "Come Out, Come Out, Whoever You Are" in **Portland, Oregon**. A morning rain cleared just fifteen minutes before the seven-block long procession stepped off to Waterfront Park. Lesbian writer Sharon McDonald delivered Portland's keynote address.

In **St. Louis**, on June 26, the number of marchers was diminished by a heavy downpour of rain just before the fourth annual pride parade was to begin. But 300 hardy souls with raincoats and umbrellas took up their banners for the two mile trek along the march route. At a post-march rally, a larger crowd of five to six hundred heard a keynote speech delivered by Mayor Gene Ulrich of Bunceton, Missouri (pop. 419). Ulrich is the only known openly gay mayor of any town or city in the country. Having been re-elected for a second term, Ulrich is considering running for higher office.

The 150 or so gay men and lesbians who marched and rallied in **Ann Arbor, Michigan** were rudely surprised by a man who had repeatedly attempted to disrupt their rally and then returned bearing a loaded shotgun. No shots were fired before he was unarmed by Ann Arbor police. He was booked on charges stemming from the incident, but according to Annette Wilson of Ann Arbor, the local police have dropped the charges and discouraged anyone from coming forward to file a complaint against the man. Finally, though, a woman did file a complaint against Robert Higgins, 36, identified by several witnesses as the man who brandished a shotgun at the rally. Higgins is scheduled for a pretrial hearing on July 6.

One thousand people in **Columbus, Ohio** strolled down Gay Street to the Ohio state house where journalist Larry Bush addressed the crowd. Bush discussed the government's lack of response to the AIDS crisis. A statement of support from Ohio Governor Richard Celeste was read at the rally. During the march, hecklers from the Moral Majority had taunted the marchers with shouts of "You deserve AIDS because of your sin."

The **Minneapolis** Gay Pride Committee enjoyed record crowds for their events. The best-attended of the events was a huge block party attracting 4500 lesbians and gay men. The eleventh annual pride march drew 1500 marchers, with another 1000 attending the annual Festival of Pride.

In **Atlanta**, 2000 people observed "Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Day" because Mayor Andrew Young refused to issue a proclamation of pride and instead heralded "civil rights." West coast lesbian

ACLU lawyer Susan McGrievy was among the rally speakers.

One hundred and fifty **Providence, Rhode Island** gay men and lesbians and their supporters hit the streets for the eighth year in a row. David Scondras, a gay man running for city council in Boston's District 8, spoke at the rally, as did Diane Cook of the Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights. Cook told the crowd, "Every one of you, gay and straight, has had to risk something to be here today... for an unpopular cause. You're incredibly brave, and if you're straight, you're gutsy, too."

By Ellen Young

PHOENIX — "Uniting for Freedom, Recognition, and Understanding," the third annual Lesbian and Gay Human Rights March and Rally was sponsored by the Arizona Lesbian and Gay Task Force (ALGTF) on June 25th. Gay men and lesbians from around the state, including Tucson and the small town of Kingman, as well as a contingent from NOW were represented.

From 1500 to 2000 people marched to a rally at the Phoenix Civil Plaza, where three thousand red, white, and blue balloons were released, symbolizing freedom and "marking the entrance of the Arizona Lesbian and Gay Task Force into mainstream politics," according to co-chair Kirk Baxter.

While the number of participants was fewer than expected, Baxter said, "I'm not disappointed with the turnout. People are afraid. We got a number of calls from people who said they wouldn't march because we were going down Central."

Central Avenue, one of the largest and most heavily travelled streets in the city, had not been easily secured as part of the march route. Three months earlier the Phoenix Police Department had approved a route which would have proceeded down Central for nearly four miles. Then three weeks before the event this was withdrawn and other suggestions were made by the police and city officials. Most of these were unacceptable to the Task Force because they included little or none of Central. Finally ALGTF went to the Phoenix City Council, and created so much publicity that the matter was hurriedly put to rest. The final route was a variation on a compromise that the Task Force had suggested to the Council.

The most enthusiastic responses of the day were inspired by the rally.

Several minutes of applause and cheering followed the introduction of keynote speaker Wisconsin state Rep. David Clarenbach (D-Madison). Clarenbach authored a comprehensive gay rights bill and a bill to decriminalize sex between consenting adults, making Wisconsin the only state to enact both pro-gay bills. He encouraged the crowd to do the same in Arizona by writing and calling their legislators and by supporting the Task Force.

By John Zeh

CINCINNATI — Pride Week '83, the sixth here, achieved a sophistication and pervasiveness that others in the Midwest might envy.

Mayor Tom Brush declined to officially declare June 11-19 Pride Week, but did issue a proclamation recognizing "the endeavors of the gay and lesbian community and [expressing] best wishes for success," which pleased organizers. Mayors the past two years had not cooperated.

More than 350 people, most of them wearing red shirts, opened the week with a party at Kings Island park. Advance publicity elicited participation from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Cleveland, Ohio.

Two picnics, an ecumenical church service, reports on "subject-subject consciousness" and AIDS, screenings of "You Are Not Alone" and "Personal Best," and a dance rounded out the eight-day observance. A precedent-setting gay production on AIDS was aired twice during the week. And about 150 people attended a June 19 rally, featuring a Keynote speech by Harry Hay, longtime gay activist from Los Angeles.

In the early 1900's, wearing red, particularly a red neck tie, was, in some locales, "to wear one's badge," signifying homosexuality. Celebrants at Kings Island revived the tradition.

"It's funny to see people's reaction," commented the secretary of the Greater Cincinnati Gay Coalition (GCGC), which coordinated Pride Week. "When some realize what we are, they buy different-colored shirts and change. Some ask, 'What is this, some kind of fraternity?' The standard response is 'No, we're a sorority!' There's a lot of good reaction from people."

Asked why the day at an amusement park was given promotion equal to the more political rally, he replied, "This really represents the fun part of Pride Week, a chance for everybody to get out and have a good time, with real sense of unity and strength in numbers. When 100 people get together to see a show or ride a ride, it doesn't matter if they hold their lover's hand. People don't worry about harassment; they just be themselves."



New York City, photo by Bob Nelson



St. Louis, Mo., photo by Dave Folkers

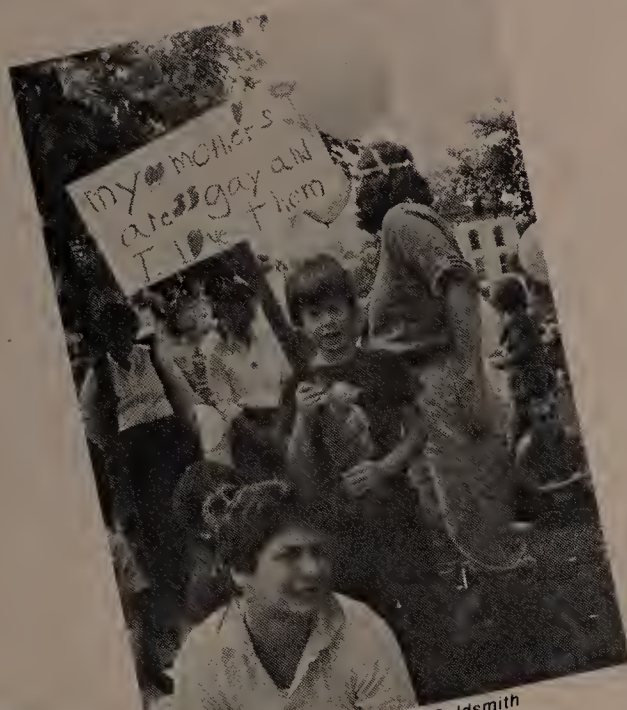


Portland, Or., photo by Billy Russo



St. Louis, Mo., photo by Dave Folkers

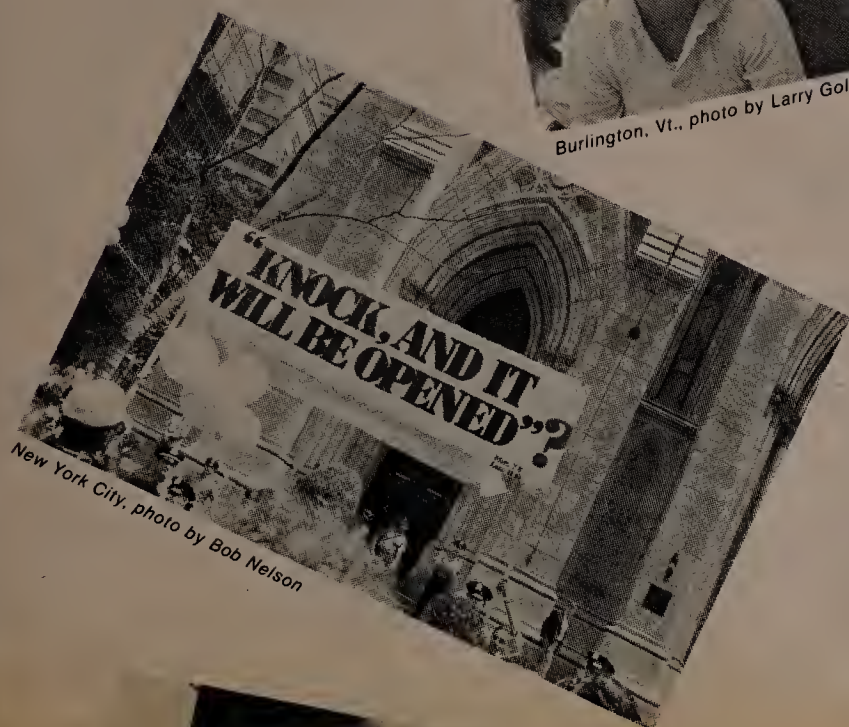
IDE '83



Burlington, Vt., photo by Larry Goldsmith



Burlington, Vt., photo by Larry Goldsmith



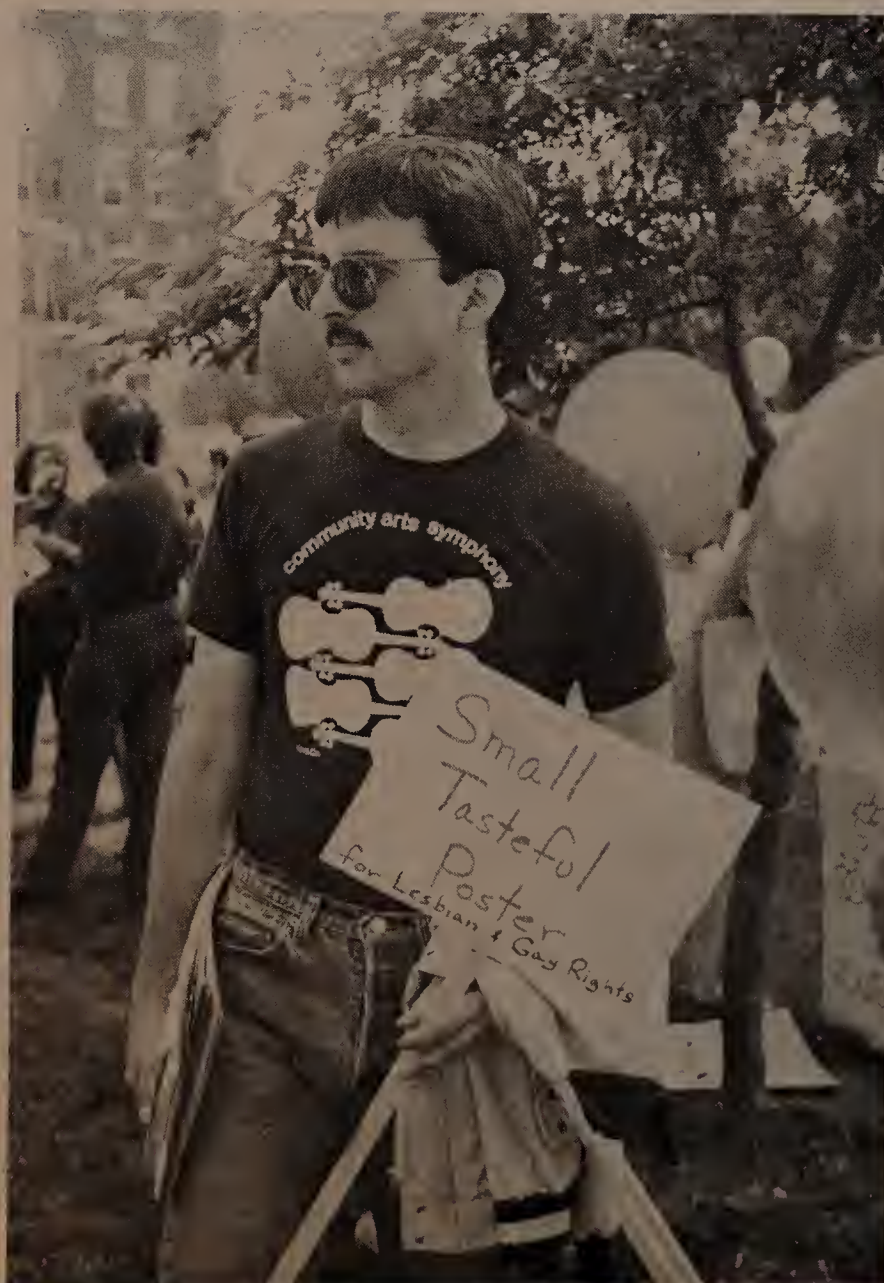
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Minneapolis, Mn., photo by Mark Bellenoit

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A Woman's Own Episode Final: Marcie Goes to Gay Pride

By Andrea Loewenstein

"Awesome to the max!" ejaculated Marcie Linguini, as the young womoon, resembling for all the world a swollen bud threatening to erupt, watched the march surge by, chanting and gesticulating in their grotty and vulgar plumage. It was Marcie's Veryfirst Gaypride march, and the sight of so many of HerKind in one place caused the hairs on her legs to stand up straight and the sweat to pour down like a fountain overflowing from her lovely young arm pits. And yet Marcie paused with hesitant feet on the sidewalk where the brook and swamp met. Was she the only one in all the swirling crowd with neither group, partner, nor pet—the only one who had come to Gaypride all alone?

Marcie watched a beaming Olderwomoon march by, linked arm-in-arm with her tall son, he resplendent in a lavender jock-strap, she sporting a large sign with read, "I'M PROUD I MADE MY SON GAY!" After a while, she spotted her ex-teacher, Claire Engelhamburger, walk by, deep in obviously profound conversation with her lover, the massuese, Friday Child.

"I wish I had a lover or my Mom to march with," whimpered Marcie, who had told her Mom she was shopping for college clothes at Filene's Basement.

"LESBIAN SM 4H CLUB" read another proudly welded sign. "DO IT WITH UNDERAGE GERMAN SHEPHERDS" read another.

Dogged and cowed, Marcie shrunk back further into her shell. "They can all probably tell just by looking that I haven't done it with anyone at all," she mused paranoidly, "Except for that one time in the steam room, and that was just because they didn't know it was me. I don't belong with all

these Gay and Proud people. Maybe I better go home and watch this march on TV!"

Little did our Marcie know that the grass is always Columbian on the other side. Let us look now, dear reader, at the sinister dramas so redolent of the seamy side of the invert's life which lurked so close under the happily deceptive surfaces Marcie had observed.

"Mother, I wish you'd find your own parade to march in," Sal Guilteri was hissing between splintering gritty teeth. "Can't you let me have something of my own for once in my life? How am I sposed to pick anyone up at the rally with you along?"

"Never mind, dear," she answered, long-sufferingly. "I was only trying to please you. And perhaps we'll find someone who's into an incestuous threesome, anyway."

Meanwhile, Friday Child and Claire Engelhamburger, aware that in order to achieve the lesbian-feminist-socialist-egalitarian ideal, all issues must be struggled with until flogged to death, engaged in bitter colloquy.

"So go march with the Afro-Amazons already," said Claire, "I'll go march with the Judeo-Judiths. We'll never find each other the whole march, but that's fine. Just don't expect me to come rescue you again if you end up worshipping in another ash-can." Friday stood stock-still with exasperation, thus holding up her part of the march and receiving a smart blow from the steel-studded cricufix held by one of the members of SARM (Sex as Religious Mortification) who was moving along at a fast trot so as not to be confused with the flanking group, MOB (Men Onto Boys).

"We can't march with the HTT (Holier Than Thou) women be-

cause we'll be sure to run into Pony Hightower and Naomi Clamshell and every other damn ex either of us has ever had in this town. You say you don't want to go with 'the polar-puncturitis group, and I'll be damned if I go with the schoolteachers. You told me yourself you owe seven articles to the features editor of *Gay Controversy Networks*, so you're too guilty to march with them. And you know I'm allergic to dogs!"

Arguing absorbedly in the primordial way of lovers, they were startled when the white balloons, filled with wobbly gay gas, landed on their heads as the church-bells chimed.

"Oh well," the two began to smile simultaneously. "Here we are." And now Claire turned to Friday with a look of tenderness illuminating her face. "You know, I feel thankful to Woman's Own, even if we don't go there anymore. Without it, I never would have met you."

"We would have met." And Friday, whose religious experience had left her with a Cosmic sense of the Karmic sway of all life, kissed her lover on the lips. "Woman's Own was only an end to a means for us. Sooner or later, we would have met. Oh look," she added. "There's Marcie, talking to a real cutey. Over here, Marcie."

And soon the four of them sat together 'neath the hot gay sun, quietly holding hands as they listened to the boring speeches and greeted the stream of old friends, enemies, lovers, and bedfellows who made up the tatters and patches of their Lesbian Lives.

"We are proud to announce," bellowed the MC, "our next speaker. She's only been Out a few weeks, but she's fat, overfifty, Jewish, into leather, and suffers

Continued on page 11

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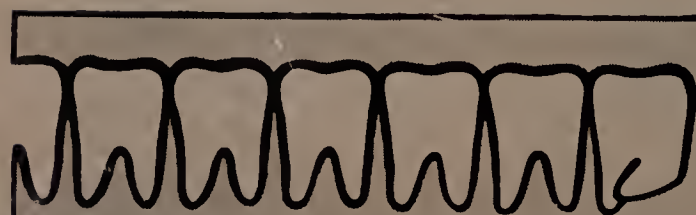
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S/M Forum

Continued from page 6

principles which reign over a feminist's "real" life should also govern her s/m scenes. Some s/m lesbians around the country, attacked for using Nazi paraphernalia in s/m play, have argued that what they do sexually does not reflect or affect their politics. No one at the Boston forum said they are convinced that the two have no relationship, but most who spoke felt uncomfortable imposing limits on what other women do consensually in private.

It was evident that this was one of the first dialogues about lesbian s/m that Boston s/m lesbians and their supporters have had. Many women contradicted themselves. For example, a leather dyke, who has probably been thrown out of a few "women's spaces" herself, came dangerously close to saying that women whose attire offends her should not be allowed in lesbian bars.

"I have no place in telling anyone what to do in bed," said

one of the panelists. "Where it starts to step on my toes is if I have to see it. If I have to see somebody in the bar dressed in complete Gestapouniform, that would be a little bit much. That effects me, and it's not consensual because I don't want to see that . . . If it's spilling out into real life — if they go out and join the Klan because they like it, then it is a problem."

"Talking about limits gets into absurdity after a while," said another woman. "How are we going to police what people think, what people do sexually, what people say to each other when they talk about sex?"

However, the woman who had said earlier that she thinks unresolved problems in a relationship should be kept out of s/m play said that feminist values should *not* be kept out.

"There is a difference between feminist s/m and non-feminist s/m," she said, then went on to imply that it is okay to use racist or classist stereotypes in s/m play on-

ly if you are in reality a member of an oppressed race or class and you somehow reverse this dynamic in the scene.

"As a white feminist, I have no business doing master/slave scenes, for example. If I want to play with those kinds of really strong power imbalances, I need to find other symbols, other ways to do that. Class is one I do play with. Some friends (of mine) did a scene where there was a working class chauffeurastop and a rich bitch in back (playing the bottom.) With this [kind of scene] I work with my own feelings of powerlessness as a working class woman."

During the forum, one "non-s/m lesbian" present asked, "How do I explain to my non-s/m friends about s/m?"

"Let she who is without fantasy cast the first stone," someone answered.

The Boston Area Lesbian S/M Group holds social get-togethers monthly. Call 776-7957 for more information. Urania meets Tues-

days at 7:30. Discussion topics for the upcoming two months include: psychological drama of scenes and psychic domination; s/m in other cultures; verbal abuse and humiliation; paraphernalia and safety concerns; what does it mean for a woman to be a top? For information call 623-7258 or write to Box 23, 89 Mass. Avenue, Boston, 02115.



A Woman's Own

Continued from page 10

from a partial hearing loss in one ear, so we thought she was too good to pass up."

Proud of this sparkling introduction, our old friend Ivy Littleneck took the witness stand. "I'd like to begin my speech with a little poem," she said, "dedicated

to all my friends at a Woman's Own."

Of my own sex I'd dream and moan
But always thought I was alone,
Until I came to Woman's Own,
And all those females in the nude
Caused my thoughts to get quite
lewd.

A steam-room orgy showed me the way—

So now I stand up here today,
Deaf and Jewish, fat and grey,
But most of all—Proud and Gay!

"It looks like a Woman's Own was an end to a means for other women than us," Friday nudged Claire.

"It certainly was for me," agreed Marcie. "Along with knowing you two."

"Yes," agreed Claire, "I think it served a purpose for all of us. And now, on to bigger and better things!"

In the last episode, Friday's Psychic Seekings led her to take refuge in a puce ash-can from which she had to be removed by Claire.

New York

Continued from page 1

June 25 edition of the New York Times, Apuzzo said, "If the New York Times can say that the Reagan administration is yawning over the AIDS crisis, then you and me know they are sound asleep, and we're going to wake them up!"

In a special message to Governor Cuomo, Apuzzo noted that "we needed that \$5.2 million and it's a damn good thing we got it." (See related article, this issue.)

Other speakers at the rally included comic Robin Tyler, Larry Kramer, a founder of the Gay Men's Health Crisis, Betty Powell, a Brooklyn College professor and Astraea Foundation activist, and James Credle, a Vietnam War veteran and Black and White Men Together activist. One speaker approved by the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee at the last minute was Billy Burke, a gay man with AIDS, whose mother accompanied him to the podium, eliciting cheers from the crowd.

"Some people have referred to me as an AIDS victim," said Burke. "That term implies helplessness and defeat. I am neither. I am a breathing, feeling, sexual being with a disease."

"We have to honor the dead, but we have responsibility to the living," Burke added. "People are being discriminated against because of this disease. I'm convinced that fear and hysteria are far more contagious than any disease."

Vermont

Continued from page 1

Vermont's largest (and only) city, still maintains a small-town atmosphere among its 38,000 residents.

"For every gay man I've talked to who says he's coming to the march, there are ten gay men who say they are afraid," explained Howdy Russell, a lifelong resident of the area who spoke at the rally. "That's why we're here today."

But, said Russell, "I'm a little more angry than I'm scared."

Following the rally, the crowd, many carrying banners, placards and lavender balloons, marched along a one-mile route that took them past Pearl's, the city's lesbian and gay bar, the *Free Press* offices, where the marchers broke into a chorus of boos, and Church Street, a pedestrian shopping mall, where shoppers and the patrons of sidewalk cafes suddenly found themselves in the midst of the parade.

"It's the homosexuals," exclaimed one woman shopper. "Aren't they beautiful?"

A wedding party assembled in front of the First Congregational Church looked on as the marchers passed by. A man from the party threw rice at the parade, and a bouquet-carrying woman in a purple dress accepted a lavender balloon from one of the marchers.

Despite the adverse publicity, and a few anonymous telephone

threats received by Burlington police, the day passed without incident and with only an occasional interruption by an isolated heckler. Representatives of the church coalition which had fought the Aldermen's proclamation passed out literature promoting cures and salvation from a small table at the

far end of City Hall Park.

By the end of the day, participants were calling the afternoon a success, and even the *Free Press* reporter covering the event had words of praise. "I've got to say," admitted Bill Braun, "as parades go, it was a hell of a lot better than Memorial Day."

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We seek a world where justice reigns
Where people can be free.*

*We're many races, creeds and types
We're many yet we're one
We're everywhere in every land
We may be anyone.*

*Yes, we've been queer ten thousand
years
Bright shining as the sun
Our movement's progress has been
great
And more is still to come.*

Original Hymn: Amazing Grace

By Will James

They stand sedately grouped on the stage in black choir robes. Two women and two men, they smile sweetly — almost beatifically — and begin to sing in rich harmony:

*Amazing gays, how sweet we sound
As we sing harmony
We seek a world where justice reigns
Where people can be free.*

This is a gospel quartet like no other. They are San Francisco's Choral Majority, and for two and one half years they have simultaneously delighted and shocked audiences — they call them "congregations" — with their parodies of hymns and patriotic songs. The quartet, consisting of soprano Leslie Hassberg, alto Barbara Brautigam, tenor Larry Wisch and bass Tim Curbo, sings, dances, jokes and preaches in its continuing battle against homophobia, the new right, sexism and Reaganomics.

The Choral Majority's goals are to celebrate gay community while at the same time challenging audiences and informing them of issues — all to the tune of a church



The Choral Majority singing at the GCN Birthday Party.

choir. "I've always loved singing these songs," says Barbara Brautigam, a former Lutheran and Baptist who has sung in choirs since age five. "But if I ever stopped to think about the words ... ecch!" Similarly, Tim Curbo, a former Methodist choir director, loved the singing, "but the lyrics were empty."

Leslie Hassberg says, "What appeals to me about our music is that we are taking what's been used as a weapon against us and turning it back on the new right. It's a liberating experience for many people who grew up with this music to hear our lyrics, to realize that this music can be changed."

"People need to be stretched," Curbo adds. "We don't want to simply please people, telling them what they already know. Part of our thing is to offend and shake people up. We attack sacred cows of all kinds and help people question them. If anything is made too sacred it becomes oppressive, be it religion, or feminism or gay

politics."

In keeping with this, the group lampoons everything from Moral Majority style religion to lesbian and gay male lifestyles. Commenting on a good natured spoof of Holly Near's "Nicolia" Hassberg says, "Even Holly Near shouldn't be a sacred cow. It doesn't do anyone any good to feel they're right all the time. That's one of the most important things we're saying. At some point we manage to offend everyone. But they love it! They tell us what it is they don't like, but they *do* listen to us."

The Choral Majority got its start two and a half years ago singing against the Moral Majority under the sponsorship of Community United Against Violence (CUAV). Then, as now, Larry Wisch wrote the lyrics and Leslie Hassberg was musical director. For a year they sang on an ad hoc basis, Leslie and Larry being the only consistent members. The group began to stabilize when Tim Curbo and

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Not Usual

Continued from page 1

New York," said one transplanted New Yorker who had traded the East River for Lake Champlain. "There's seven miles of people marching. None of them are making a statement. But to march here in Burlington means coming out to everyone in town."

I didn't understand at first why they held the rally before the march. Usually, Pride rallies serve as an epilogue, to collect and give vent to the energy built up in the streets. But I soon realized that the rally was to function as a warmup for the main event. Gathered in the park facing city hall, people lent each other support, building courage from the speeches and the simple presence of 500 lesbians and gay men in full view.

When they finally marched, the anxiety turned to euphoria as the procession picked up momentum. The statement made by the 500 marchers met, for the most part, with approval and support from the crowds of bystanders.

I had a moment of regret once, during the long bus trip en route to the march. Why had I taken off alone, leaving all my friends to enjoy the once-yearly exhilaration in sheer numbers at the New York march? But as I filled time on the bus trip home by writing the accompanying article, I only felt sorry that none of them had accepted my invitation to come north for an unusually impressive display of Lesbian and Gay Pride.

AIDS Funding

Continued from page 3

(D-Saugerties), a legislative ally of the governor. "There seems to be growing awareness that the general population could be involved."

But Steve Altschuler of Goodman's office, noted, "The governor always wants to know where the money is. He didn't come around on his own, this was played up in the Albany press and he probably got worried about the publicity. His track record on this issue hasn't been very good."

— filed from New York



Choral Majority

Continued from page 6

Ruth Shoenbach joined, and a year ago Barbara Brautigam replaced Ruth as alto. In its short existence, the Choral Majority has sung at the '81 and '82 San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day Rallies, the '82 San Jose Gay Day and numerous other engagements, and collaborated with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in the famous "Holy Daze" celebration, an Easter, Passover and Pagan festival held in the spring of 1982.

"When we started," says Wisch, "we were into confrontation, but we've found the songs that last, that audiences request,

are the ones that affirm, like 'Amazing Gays'. They are the songs that build community." Brautigam adds, "Offending can be limiting. Somewhere there's a balance between offending and affirming. That's what it's all about."

"Our material has changed based on people's responses and our own feelings," notes Hassberg. "We've moved away from the more virulently anti-religious stuff toward more affirming, gay pride material."

Such shifts are not haphazard for the Choral Majority. They are the result of careful thought and discussion. When Wisch writes a song, he submits it to the group who then discuss and make appropriate changes in the lyrics. "We work by consensus," says Wisch. "If anyone feels strongly against a song, we don't sing it."

"For example," says Brautigam, "I've been the most vocal against songs that talk about things like felling Jesus. It hits too close to home, to my religious upbringing, even though I don't practice it any more. Also, I think that there are other things we could sing that evoke more positive, enlightened responses."

"We're four different people," says Wisch, "with four different outlooks. We think that's positive in helping us reflect the gay world back on itself."

They also bring four distinct contributions to the group. Wisch is the lyricist, Hassberg is musical director, Brautigam is theatrical director and Curbo creates and maintains props and costumes.

The Choral Majority is not, at this point, profit making. Income goes into a common pool to cover the quartet's expenses. Groups they perform for are asked to pay expenses when possible, but if they

can't the Choral Majority may well take the job anyway, as they did with the GCN birthday party. Most of their income is derived from the sale of their tape and "Hymnal."

"We've come to a point," says Hassberg, "where we have to decide whether we want to make money or not. We're very conflicted over that. We have differing levels of commitment to the group and our own careers. This is one of the things we want to work out on this tour."

The quartet's current east coast tour, which includes, in addition to performances at the GCN Birthday party and the Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride Rally, playing at the New Jersey Gay Activists' Alliance Picnic, the People's Voice Cafe in New York City and at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, is, according to Wisch, "an exceptional thing. Travelling is difficult for us to work out because of our various commitments to our work, our lovers, our families."

While the exact future of the Choral Majority is uncertain, the group is sure there will be a Choral Majority. "I love being in the group," says Hassberg. "It fills half the needs in my life — I can be political, do music and be a ham all at the same time."

Curbo adds, "It scares me how serious the gay community has become. People need comedy now, they need us. We're saying to them 'loosen up!'"

Wisch concurs, "We'll be around as long as we make sense, as long as we have a calling."

The Choral Majority's tape is available for \$6.00 and their Hymnal for \$4.00 (plus postage) from: The Choral Majority, 964 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

LESBIAN SEX

Larry Wisch

Susie E. Hatfield

I am tied up in knots and my heart can't define

The great rush that I feel when your leathers rub mine.

I'm a lesbian feminist, SM and proud, Gay sisters request that I not be so loud.

Who holds the patent on lesbian sex? Is there a blue book, who wrote the text?

Some people wonder what lesbians do. Have you heard rumors? Figure they're true.

I just want to hold hands and gaze into your thighs,

I'm organic and spiritual, Pisces is my sign.

In my last incarnation I lived in Bel Air,

Gay sisters imply that I should have stayed there.

Is sex a sharing deep in one's heart? Love me completely, not a la carte. Some women wonder what lesbians do. Don't wonder, do it... be a dyke too.

I decry shameful porno, erotica's fine.

If you can't tell the difference, I'll show you sometime.

Erotica's artful and tastefully done, And should you use porno, don't tell anyone.

Is sex erotic, is sex mundane?

Is it a balance of pleasure and pain? Some only wonder, I'd rather just do

There's nothing to it, try something new.

I'm a class-conscious, anti-imperialist dyke,

I can sign to pedestrians while revving my bike.

I support every struggle, yes, even my own.

Gay sisters request that I leave them alone.

Who holds the patent on lesbian sex? Is there a blue book, who wrote the text?

Some lesbians wonder what lesbians do.

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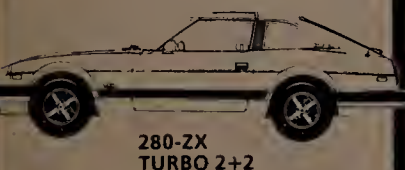
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